



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# News Release

## **ICE & ATF TEAM UP TO ARREST 61 GANG MEMBERS & VIOLENT OFFENDERS IN ENFORCEMENT OPERATION COVERING SEVEN STATES**

***-- Operation is the first under new anti-gang partnership between ATF and ICE --***

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Officials from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) today announced that a joint operation targeting violent gang members in seven states and the District of Columbia has resulted in the arrest of 61 individuals on various criminal charges and administrative immigration violations over the past week.

Beginning on Dec. 12 and continuing through Dec. 20, ATF and ICE special agents worked with state and local law enforcement agencies to arrest targeted street gang members in Albuquerque, New Mexico; Baltimore, Maryland; Greensboro, North Carolina; Tucson, Arizona; Los Angeles, California; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Tulsa, Oklahoma; and the District of Columbia metropolitan area.

In total, 55 of those arrested in the operation had a prior violent criminal history. Nine of them have now been charged with criminal violations, including felony re-entry after deportation, while the remaining have been charged with administrative immigration violations and placed into deportation proceedings.

In total, ICE and ATF agents arrested members of 19 different street gangs, including Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13), Tiny Rascals, Latin Kings, Boys in Style, Centralis-13, Tepa-13, Hang Out Boys, Crazy Riders, 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, Maywood Locos, 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Harpy, SUR-13, Toonerville, Vatos Locos, Westside Locos, La Raza, Brown Pride, and Mexican Mafia.

The week-long operation resulted from a joint decision by senior ICE and ATF officials in November 2005 to coordinate street gang operations by combining ICE's "Operation Community Shield" and the ATF's Violent Crime Impact Team (VCIT) initiative. By combining forces in these areas, ATF and ICE officials anticipate having a far greater impact on street gangs and violent crime in communities throughout the country.

ICE's Operation Community Shield was launched in February 2005 to disrupt and dismantle violent, transnational street gangs by bringing to bear ICE's full spectrum of immigration and customs authorities, including drug and financial investigative expertise, against these criminal organizations.

To date, ICE's Operation Community Shield has resulted in the arrest of more than 1,760 gang members and associates nationwide, including nearly 800 members of the MS-13 street gang.

ATF's Violent Crime Impact Team Initiative currently operates in 22 cities throughout the United States and will expand in 2006. ATF-led VCIT teams work with federal, state, and local law enforcement and prosecutors to identify, arrest, and prosecute the most violent criminals in each city. The VCIT initiative is especially focused on the reduction of gun-related violence that is often perpetrated by violent gangs.

"By combining forces, ICE and ATF are dealing serious blows to criminal street gangs and working to reduce violence in communities throughout the nation," said John P. Clark, Acting Assistant Secretary for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. "The success of this initiative should send the message that public safety is a top priority and that we intend to continue being violent street gang's worst nightmare."

"This operation delivers a clear warning to violent street gangs that ATF and ICE are teaming up to defeat the gangs' scourge on our communities. We are combining our strengths and our resources in collaborative law enforcement operations to achieve results," said ATF Director Carl J. Truscott. "By working in partnership with our ICE colleagues and using our Violent Crime Impact Team strategy, ATF is furthering its mission to prevent terrorism, combat violent crime, and protect the Nation."

Some of those arrested in the operation include:

- On Monday, December 19, ICE took custody of a Salvadoran national who was arrested by the Los Angeles Police Department last week for being in possession of a firearm and a member of the White Fence gang. This individual has a previous narcotics conviction and prior arrests for murder, robbery, vandalism, drug sales, cruelty to a child, driving under the influence, and grand theft.
- Early on Monday in Las Vegas, ICE agents along with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Gang Unit arrested a Mexican national and self admitted Rebels-13 street gang member after being convicted on August 9 in the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court in Clark County, Nevada for Discharging a Firearm from a Vehicle. He was sentenced to 24 to 120 months in prison (suspended) and three years probation. The original complaint charged him with Attempted Murder with a Deadly Weapon and Discharging a Firearm from a Vehicle.
- Last week in Greensboro, ICE and ATF agents arrested seven gang members including members of the Latin Kings, Boys in Style, Tiny Rascals, and MS-13. One gang member arrested in the enforcement operation was found to be in possession of an AR-15 assault rifle and a Cobray M11 9mm machine pistol.
- Also on Monday, December 19, ICE agents along with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Gang Unit, apprehended Oscar Elias, after being convicted on October 29 in Clark County, Nevada for assault with a deadly weapon. Elias was sentenced to 18 to 60 months in prison (suspended) and three years probation. The original complaint charged him with Aiming a Firearm at a Human Being, Assault with a Deadly Weapon, and Minor in Possession of a Firearm. Elias entered the U.S. illegally, has been convicted of an

aggravated felony, crime of violence, and has freely admitted that he is a member of the Brown Pride Locos street gang.

In total, the operation netted arrests in the following cities:

Albuquerque, NM – 2 arrests  
Baltimore, MD – 9 arrests  
Greensboro, NC – 7 arrests  
Tucson, AZ – 13 arrests (1 criminal arrest)  
Los Angeles, CA – 9 (5 criminal arrests)  
Minnesota, MN – 5 (2 criminal arrests)  
Tulsa, OK – 5 arrests  
District of Columbia – 9  
Las Vegas - 2

# ICE #